

The gift that we all can give!

"But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully."- 2 Corinthians 9:6

From this scripture we understand that whatever we invest into God's Kingdom, for His glory, we will receive a spiritual return in His due time. This spiritual return can be either positive or negative. If we sparingly sow forgiveness then we shall sparingly reap the blessings of God. However, if we live in the reality of how "God for Christ's sake has forgiven" us (Ephesians 4:32),

then our Christian character will move us to bountifully sow forgiveness and then we will reap the blessings of God bountifully. You see, one does not merit heaven on the basis of forgiving others, but rather forgiveness is part of the new disposition of a person who is already born-again. Therefore, an unforgiving Christian is a contradiction.

Forgiveness is a foreign word today and yet forgiveness is a vital commodity of love. The Lord Jesus taught in the Model Prayer, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us" (Luke 11:4). Now don't be mistaken. This is not a petition for God to help us to forgive others, but it is a statement that is saying to God, "Father, deal with us in the same way we deal with others." The idea is that as children of God we first forgive, then we are forgiven by our Heavenly Father. That's the order. However, the forgiveness here does not merit salvation, but this forgiveness has to do with fellowship (read-1 John 1:3-9).

Now the question comes up: Do you forgive sparingly, or do you forgive bountifully? Some will say, "Well you don't know what that person did. That isn't fair!" Of course it isn't, that's why it's called

forgiveness. Understand that forgiveness originated with God. Therefore, to forgive in the truest sense means that God must be involved. What is missed about forgiveness is that it is substitutionary in nature. The prime example is Christ who took our place on the cross and died paying the price for our sin crimes against God. In a practical sense we pay the price for those who sinned against us by overlooking their wrongs. When we choose to forgive from our heart we first disarm bitterness, anger, and pain in our lives. You see we have the choice of living in the bondage of bitterness or

in the freedom of forgiveness. We have the choice of sowing sparingly or sowing bountifully.

Granting forgiveness is the reason Christ, the Son of God, was born into this world. So during the Christmas and New Year's season let me share with you the greatest gift that you can give. It is the gift of forgiveness. Take the wrapping paper of humility and tie it with a bow of love, and give the gift that keeps on giving this year and every year. Forgiveness is a gift that we all can give!

> David C. Hale, pastor Email: insights@gmx.com



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